

**Ohio Troops to Teachers Program  
Annual Technical Report**  
Grant Year 1 (July 15, 2018- June 30, 2019)

Grant Agreement Number: H98210-18-1-0016

September 30, 2019



*Education Program Specialist Eric Petro (left) and Ohio program coordinator David Schklar LTC, U.S. Army (Ret) (right)*

## Executive Summary

The Ohio Department of Education received the Ohio Troops to Teachers grant in July 2018. During the previous grant, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services administered the program. With the transition the Ohio Department of Education posted the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator position in August 2018 and hired David Schklar, a retired, U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and former science teacher. Schklar began working in September 2018.

This report summarizes Grant Year 1 of the 5-year grant program, starting with 9 of the most significant Ohio Troops to Teachers program activities. All stem from goals A, C or F found on the next page.

1. Developed a tracking mechanism to record telephone, electronic and in-person communication among Troops to Teachers participants, Ohio-based military units, K-12 schools and districts, higher education institutions and the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator. (Goal A)
2. Established an Ohio Troops to Teachers Advisory Council that brought together education administrators and members of veteran stakeholder groups. The council reviews the activities of the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator and helps the coordinator identify and address institutional and social barriers that confront military veterans wanting to enter education careers. (Goal A)
3. Created an [Ohio Troops to Teachers program webpage](#) on the Ohio Department of Education website. The page includes hyperlinks that take site visitors deeper into Troops to Teachers program information and resources. (Goal A)
4. Worked with the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Communications and Outreach to produce or update promotional materials, including videos the Department is releasing in late 2019. (Goal A)
5. Connected with Ohio-affiliated military service members, reservists and veterans whose names and contact information the program coordinator gathered from the national Troops to Teachers organization and other sources. (Goal A)
6. Established relationships with Ohio-based military units, such as the U.S. Air Force, Ohio National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard and took part in military-related events, including the Transition Assistance Program workshops at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton. Wright-Patterson is Ohio's only active duty military facility. (Goal A)
7. Established relationships with education leaders in K-12 schools and districts, as well as faculty and staff at colleges and universities. (Goal F)
8. Recruited six district superintendents to serve as volunteer mentors who will help Ohio Troops to Teachers participants transition from military service to the classroom. (Goals C)
9. Developed job descriptions for five part-time, regional coordinators the Department will hire in Grant Year 2. (Goal A)



*Ohio Troops to Teachers Advisory Council, April 10, 2019 - Left to right: (Row 1 - David H. Schklar LTC, (USA, retired), Ohio Troops to Teachers Program Coordinator; Raquel P. Dowdy-Cornute, Human Resources, Training and EEO expert; Jay E. Johnson, Col, (USMC, retired), Dir, Professional & Executive Education, Dublin Integrated Education Center; Thomas N. Moe Col (USAF, retired), former Dir, Ohio Troops to Teachers and former Dir, Ohio Department of Veterans Services; Row 2 – Mike Forrest, MAJ (USA, retired), Dir, Veterans Transition and Services; James Brady, MGySgt (USMC, retired), Superintendent, Buckeye United School District, Ohio Department of Youth Services; Christopher Picha, Military & Veteran Community Liaison, Ohio Department of Veterans Services; Dennis Laich, MG, (USA, retired), Dir, Ohio Dominican University PATRIOT's program; Mike Hebenthal, Maj (USAF, retired), Superintendent, Centerburg Local Schools.*

## **Program Goals**

- A. Increase the number of military veterans taking part in the Ohio Troops to Teachers program;
- B. Reduce state teacher certification requirements that create barriers to earning a teaching license or certificate;
- C. Provide individualized counseling to program participants;
- D. Research and implement an innovative program to award higher education academic credit to military veterans;
- E. Place program participants in teaching positions in geographic areas where there are critical shortages, especially in areas that meet a specific definition for “high-needs; and
- F. Increase the number of veterans employed as teachers.

## Program Strategies

### A. Attract eligible current and former members of the Armed Forces to increase the number of individuals taking part in the Ohio Troops to Teachers Program.

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator focused much of his Year 1 efforts on learning about the Troops to Teachers program and Ohio's system for issuing teaching certificates or licenses. The coordinator developed program and marketing materials and forged relationships with a range of stakeholder groups, including Ohio military, reserve and veteran organizations and units. Here are first-year program milestones:

1. Created and published an [Ohio Troops to Teachers webpage](#) on the Ohio Department of Education's website. This page provides easy-to-use resources and information. The Department keeps the webpage current with promotional videos of Troops to Teachers participants and updated programmatic information. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator often directs interested individuals to this webpage. During 2018-2019 school year, the webpage had 547 total visits from 485 unique visitors.



*Screenshot of a portion of the Ohio Troops to Teachers webpage, retrieved September 27, 2019*

2. Worked with the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Communications and Outreach to produce promotional videos that are being released in late 2019. The first video highlights an Ohio Troops to Teachers participant who made a positive impact on a student athlete and was inspired by his teacher's story to become a teacher and coach. A second video will be released on Veterans Day 2019. These videos, each fewer than 5 minutes, feature Ohio Troops to Teachers Advisory Council members and Ohio Troops to Teachers participants giving testimonials about the program. Here are additional messages from the videos:
  - a. Military veterans have technical skills, knowledge and experiences to bring to the education profession;
  - b. Military veterans bring organizational skills to their classrooms and buildings; and
  - c. Students respond positively, both behaviorally and academically, to teachers who are military veterans.



*Behind-the-scenes footage of filming Gregory Powell, Maj. USAF (Ret.) for Ohio Troops to Teachers promotional videos – Left to Right: Mike Perona, Office of Communications and Outreach, Ohio Department of Education; Gregory Powell, Maj (USAF, retired), Teacher and Ohio Troops to Teachers participant, Dayton Boys Preparatory Academy, Dayton, OH; David H. Schklar, LTC (USA, retired), Ohio Troops to Teachers Program Coordinator.*

3. Planned to post TTT marketing announcements on the Ohio Department of Education's social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) to advertise the Ohio TTT program to potential participants. While planning for the posting to the social media was extensive, only one Twitter post was made. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator recently met with the Department's Office of Communications and Outreach for ideas on how to renew and step up the program's social media efforts in Grant Year 2 (see Future Endeavors).
4. Presented on the Ohio Troops to Teachers program at 12 Transition Assistance Program workshops for military personnel preparing to separate or retire at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Approximately 45 individuals attended each workshop, giving the presentations a total reach of 550 individuals. Interest in the Ohio Troops to Teachers program varied by workshop, but at least two individuals followed up with the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator after each presentation.



*Entrance to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, OH*

5. Visited these Ohio-based active duty and reserve units to distribute Ohio Troops to Teachers marketing materials and familiarize unit leaders with the Troops to Teachers program:
  - a. HHT, 1/137 Aviation Regiment (Ohio National Guard), Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base – Columbus
  - b. 73<sup>rd</sup> Troop Command, Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base – Columbus
  - c. U.S. Coast Guard, Cleveland Mooring – Cleveland
  - d. U.S. Coast Guard, MSD – Cincinnati
  - e. 445<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing (USAFR), Wright-Patterson Air Force Base – Dayton
  - f. 220 Engineer Installation Squadron (EIS) – Zanesville
6. Attended these education and military events to talk about the Ohio Troops to Teachers program and distribute marketing materials:
  - a. Ohio School Boards Association Capital Conference – Columbus
  - b. The Education Job Fair, Education Service Center of Lorain County – Elyria
  - c. Hamilton Township Military Appreciation Night – Hamilton



*The Ohio Troops to Teachers information center at Hamilton County Military Appreciation Night, Feb. 7, 2019 – From Left to Right – Eric Petro, Education Specialist, Ohio Department of Education; David H. Schklar, LTC (USA, retired), Ohio Troops to Teachers Program Coordinator.*

- d. Olentangy Orange High School's 2nd Annual Military Appreciation Night – Lewis Center
- e. Ohio County Veterans Service Officers Spring Conference, Columbus Marriott Northwest – Dublin
- f. American Legion Ohio 12<sup>th</sup> Spring District Conference – Columbus
- g. Ashland County Veterans Services officers meeting – Ashland

**B. Reduce barriers that prevent veterans from meeting teacher certification or licensing requirements needed to enter education careers.**

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator reviewed the Ohio teacher certification and licensure requirements during Grant Year 1 to identify the barriers that veterans face when applying for Ohio teaching credentials. The Ohio Department of Education provides different types of teaching licenses and pathways to secure them, depending on an individual's educational background and experience. While most types of licenses require college degrees, one pathway does not: the Ohio Provisional License for Career-Technical Workforce Development. This license is best aligned with the experiences of most veterans leaving the armed services. To obtain this license, an applicant must have a minimum of a high school diploma and five years of work experience, or the equivalent, in the career field in which the veteran is seeking the teaching license. This teaching credential has the fewest requirements and is one that many veterans can qualify for based on their military training and experience. Other license types and teaching credentials do present barriers to those transitioning out of military service.

Here are Year 1 program milestones that may reduce barriers for veterans seeking initial teacher certificates or licenses:

1. The Ohio Department of Education eliminated educator licensure fees for military veterans and spouses of active duty service members. Under the fee waiver, the

Department issued 854 certificates and licenses for 2018 and 2019. *Note: This number includes both Troops to Teachers and non-Troops to Teachers program participants.*

2. The program coordinator proposed eliminating the Alternative Resident Educator initial evaluation fee of \$50 for military veterans. The Alternative Resident Educator program draws candidates from outside the teaching profession and allows schools and communities to benefit from their extensive subject knowledge, career successes and life experience. Department management is discussing the proposed waiver of an initial evaluation fee. The Troops to Teachers coordinator will continue to pursue this action.
3. Ohio law changed a requirement governing the earning of a teaching license that presented a barrier to many veterans. Prior law stipulated that, to earn an Ohio alternative educator teaching license other than the Career-Technical Education Workforce Development license, a candidate had to hold a bachelor's degree with a minimum GPA of 2.5. The law did not consider advanced degrees or the GPAs associated with them. Some veterans hold bachelor's degrees with GPAs of less than 2.5 but later earned master's degrees maintaining GPAs above 3.0. With the passing of Ohio House Bill 166, Ohio now accepts candidates with graduate degrees with a GPA of 3.0 or above. ~~3.0.~~ This requirement revision eliminates a barrier for all candidates – not just veterans – who have not been eligible to receive teaching certificates or licenses because of their academic performance in undergraduate programs.
4. Under the Department's recommendation, [Ohio law](#) also amended requirements for a [substitute teacher license](#) in 2018. These revisions eliminated substitute teachers' short-term and long-term teaching restrictions and allow substitute teachers to stay in specific classrooms longer. The revision also expanded educational requirements for the substitute teacher license, enhancing eligibility and making the substitute teacher license more attractive to veterans seeking teaching positions while they are completing the course or testing requirements to earn a full teaching license.
5. Ohio Troops to Teachers staff began an effort to persuade the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) to reimburse the Ohio Assessments for Educators (OAE) exam fees for military veterans, eliminating a financial barrier for many veterans. Although DANTES reimburses would-be teachers for the cost of taking the PRAXIS™ exam for initial licensure, it does not reimburse test-takers for the Ohio Assessments for Educators (OAE).. Since both the PRAXIS and OAE are used to determine the subject knowledge of the license candidate, the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator is working to secure agreement from DANTES to reimburse costs for those who take the OAE. The coordinator has raised this issue with Troops to Teachers program coordinators in other states who experience similar barriers, and many have agreed to work together on this issue. Eliminating the OAE cost barrier will be the subject of an Ohio Troops to Teachers program proposal and one focus of activities in Grant Year 2.

C. Provide individualized counseling to help Troops to Teachers participants meet the educational and certification requirements for transitioning to a teaching career.

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator conducted outreach and counseling for individual Ohio Troops to Teachers participants throughout the year. Here are Year 1 milestones:

1. Connected with 277 veterans through more than 650 phone, email and in-person conversations. Most of these inquiries and follow-up contacts were related to Ohio Troops to Teachers program requirements, Ohio teaching positions, and Ohio teacher

certification and licensure requirements and processes.<sup>1</sup>

2. Counseled Ohio Troops to Teachers participants. Counseling included how the Troops to Teachers program can help a service member or veteran take steps toward a career in K-12 teaching after resigning, separating or retiring from active duty status or serving in a reserve capacity. Candidates also wanted to know more about various pathways to teacher licensure in Ohio, for example, the traditional pathway, an out-of-state transfer, the Ohio Alternative Resident Educator License or the Provisional Career-Technical Workforce Development License. For the Provisional Career-Technical Workforce Development alternative teaching license, Ohio accepts the candidate's work experience as evidence of skills mastery. Local schools and districts verify those skills. Based on a service member's or veteran's educational and professional background, the program coordinator would discuss optimal career pathways and subject fields in which the individual would be eligible to teach. Counseling also included how to navigate the Ohio educator licensure process.
3. Helped more than 20 individuals complete the licensure forms, applications and other documents the Ohio Department of Education requires for teacher licensure.

D. Research and implement innovative model for colleges to award academic credit for prior career experience and training or for other relevant military training.

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator contacted veteran affairs representatives at six Ohio colleges and universities that operate teacher education programs to propose this idea. The coordinator also worked to identify models used by Ohio colleges that award academic credit for military training and experience. Here are related, Year 1 milestones:

1. Met either with faculty in colleges and universities departments of education or the military veteran's representatives for students at these higher education institutions:
  - a. Ashland University, Ashland
  - b. Mount St. Joseph University, Cincinnati
  - c. Ohio Dominican University, Columbus
  - d. The Ohio State University, Columbus
  - e. Ohio University, Dublin Integrated Education Center, Dublin
  - f. Western Governors University, Ohio Branch, Columbus
2. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator began exploring how colleges and universities could award academic credit to Ohio Troops to Teachers teacher candidates for specific instructional training they may have received in the military. Whether to award credit for this military experience appears to be a case-by-case decision that varies at each college and university. For the Alternative Resident Educator License, the Department allows candidates to show evidence of content mastery by passing the Ohio Assessment for Educators for their pursued subject areas, regardless of their undergraduate or graduate majors. Colleges then provide these candidates additional courses in the foundations of education and how to teach their subjects to K-12 students. In Grant Year 2, Ohio Troops to Teachers program staff will investigate additional information on awarding college credit for military training focused on instruction.

E. Address geographic areas that have critical teacher shortages, especially in high-need schools in particular schools that have a shortage of science, mathematics, special education,

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<sup>1</sup> Data sources include the Ohio Department of Education licensure database, national Troops to Teachers data and the communications contact log developed by the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator.

or foreign language teachers and secondary schools that are experiencing shortages of career-technical teachers.

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator identified and began contacting high-need schools throughout Ohio. The coordinator visited 15 K-12 schools and districts to deliver informational materials and talk with district administrators about the Troops to Teachers program and the benefits of hiring veterans:

- a. Ashland City Schools, Ashland
- b. Butler Technology and Career Development Schools, Fairfield Township
- c. Centerburg Local Schools, Centerburg
- d. Cleveland Metro Schools, Cleveland
- e. Columbus City Schools, Columbus
- f. Dayton City Schools, Dayton
- g. Dayton Boys School Preparatory Academy, Dayton City Schools, Dayton
- h. Elyria High School, Elyria City Schools, Elyria
- i. Fayetteville-Perry High School, Fayetteville-Perry Local Schools, Fayetteville
- j. Laurel Oaks, Great Oaks Career Center, Wilmington
- k. Lorain High School, Lorain City Schools, Lorain
- l. Miami Valley Career Technology Center, Clayton
- m. Orange High School, Olentangy Local Schools, Lewis Center
- n. Scioto 6-12, Columbus City Schools, Columbus
- o. Sharpsburg Elementary School, Norwood City Schools, Norwood

The program staff found it needed written resources for schools and districts considering hiring military veterans. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator is developing these materials for a toolkit that will help Ohio's principals, superintendents and human resources personnel – especially in eligible, high-need schools and districts – understand how to hire military veterans, as well as develop and sustain them in education careers. The U.S. Department of Labor's *Toolkit for Employers*, used with that federal agency's permission, and the Ohio Department of Education's [Human Capital Resource Center](#) electronic toolkit will provide information and support for developing the toolkit on hiring and developing veterans. During Grant Year 2, the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator will explore best ways to offer human capital resources through the Human Capital Resource Center that relate to the topic.

#### F. Increase the number of veterans employed as teachers.

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator continues to monitor the number of veterans taking part in the Troops to Teachers program and their progress toward entering teaching jobs. During Grant Year 1, Ohio 27 individuals who have completed the Troops to Teachers program and become employed as teachers in Ohio schools and districts. A map found in Appendix B displays the locations of these schools and districts(See Appendix B).

Outreach will continue in Grant Year 2 to make schools and districts aware of the Troops to Teachers program and encourage them to hire veterans. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator also will promote hiring Troops to Teachers veterans as a school's evidence of "military friendliness" and as evidence to support its potential selection as a [Purple Star School](#). Purple Star is an Ohio program created to recognize schools and districts that offer special support and services to military-connected students and families. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator will continue to champion hiring veterans by promoting the Ohio Troops to Teachers program through professional organizations and contacts. One example of these efforts in Grant Year 1 was the placement of an article in the Buckeye Association of School

Administrators (BASA) newsletter. The article encouraged schools and districts to recruit military veterans as teachers and consider Troops to Teachers participants for all open teaching positions.

### **A Look Back: Grant Year 1 Program Management and Support**

The newly hired Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator established the Ohio Troops to Teachers program office in the Ohio Department of Education's Center for Teaching, Leading and Learning. Ohio's prior Troops to Teachers program was housed and operated at the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. Logistics, support and communications successfully transitioned to the Ohio Department of Education, and the Department's fiscal management team assumed management of the Troops to Teachers program grant. Here are additional Grant Year 1 program management highlights:

1. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator established an Ohio Troops to Teachers Program Advisory Council and conducted two advisory council meetings in the new National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus. The council is comprised of 11 education, military and veteran stakeholders. Members will help the program coordinator identify and address institutional and social barriers that confront military veterans entering the education field. In Grant Year 1, council members took part in recording promotional videos that highlight the skills military veterans bring to the teaching profession and their school and district employers.
2. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator created a job description the Department will use in Grant Year 2 to hire five, part-time Ohio Troops to Teachers area coordinator positions. These area coordinators will serve as regional points of contact, providing interested veterans basic information about the program. They also will serve as initial and ongoing contacts for military-friendly schools and districts and represent the Ohio Troops to Teachers program at regional and state events.
3. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator recruited six district superintendents to serve as mentors to Troops to Teachers participants as they transition to the classroom. These volunteers will begin mentoring Troops to Teachers participants in Grant Year 2.
4. In July, the Troops to Teachers program coordinator initiated a conference call involving Troops to Teachers program coordinators in neighboring states and participated in another one involving other Troops to Teachers grantees. The calls addressed several issues, including state licensure test reimbursement by DANTES.
5. The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator met with Department staff who support Ohio's Purple Star program for military-friendly schools, asking them to promote the hiring of Troops to Teachers participants by Purple Star Schools. These efforts will continue in Grant Year 2. The Ohio Department of Education created the Purple Star Schools initiative to recognize schools and districts that provide special support and resources for students with one or more parents in the U.S. Armed Forces. Currently, there are 193 Purple Star Schools in Ohio.



### **A Look Forward: Proposed Future Endeavors:**

The Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator plans activities for Grant Year 2 that will build on Grant Year 1 activities. These also appear in Ohio's Troops to Teachers grant proposal:

1. Continue outreach and counseling efforts aimed at Troops to Teachers participants through the efforts of an expanded staff comprised of the state program coordinator and five area coordinators.
2. Continue to recruit candidates for the Troops to Teachers program through outreach efforts targeted at Ohio-based military units and continue twice-monthly presentations at Transition Assistance Program workshops at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.
3. Continue building relationships and increasing the number of contacts in Ohio's K-12 school districts, local hiring authorities and college-level teacher education programs.
4. Use marketing tools such as media articles and professional organization newsletters and websites to further expand outreach. Continue creating new resources and materials for the Ohio educator human resource toolkit for schools and districts, emphasizing the advantages of hiring reservists and veterans as teachers.
5. Continue building relationships and working with Ohio colleges and universities that offer teacher education programs to explore how they might grant veteran students credit for military training and experience – expediting the earning of a degree or teaching credential.
6. Continue working with members of the Ohio Troops to Teachers Advisory Council to identify and address institutional and social barriers that face military veterans entering education. Two annual advisory council meetings are planned.
7. Continue updating the Ohio Department of Education's Ohio Troops to Teachers webpages and materials, including posting two new Ohio Troops to Teachers promotional videos and new Ohio Troops to Teachers content on the Department's social media accounts, especially Facebook and Instagram.
8. Employ new Ohio Troops to Teachers area coordinators and volunteer Troops to Teachers mentors to help the Ohio Troops to Teachers program coordinator with outreach and support.
9. Continue seeking approval from the Ohio Department of Education to eliminate the initial Alternative Resident Educator evaluation fee of \$50 for eligible military reservists and veterans.
10. Continue working with the selection committee for Purple Star Schools to promote the hiring of Troops to Teachers participants in these schools.
11. Continue working with Troops to Teachers program coordinators or the respective department of education military veteran contacts in Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky and Indiana to address common challenges, such as encouraging reimbursement of licensure test fees for veterans.

*NOTE: There are minor discrepancies between some of the data in this annual report and the summary figures corresponding to individual measures in the four quarterly reports for Grant Year 1. Grant Year 1 experience has improved data tracking over time. Sources of data include the Ohio Troops to Teachers communications log, Ohio Department of Education licensure database and National Troops to Teachers database.*